

[Bronx, 1885]

Wash 9- 21 FOLKLORE NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview FORM

A Circumstances of Interview STATE New York NAME OF WORKER May Swenson

ADDRESS 228 W. 22 St., Manhattan DATE August 8/18/ 30 (8) SUBJECT Reminiscence of Bronx, 1885 - Mrs. J. Elterich 1. Date and time of interview August 7, 1938. 10 A. M.

2. Place of interview Home of Mrs. John Elterich 3. Name and address of informant Mrs.

John Elterich 4800 Barnes Ave. Bronx 4. Name and address of person, if any who put you in touch with informant. None 5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None 6. Description of room, houses surroundings, etc. Large frame private residence, lawn and shrubs. Rooms furnished in a style once considered elegant - too ornate and cluttered for current taste of modern severity. Many family pictures and relics on walls and about room.

FOLKLORE NEW YORK FORM B Personal History of Informant STATE New York NAME

OF WORKER May Swenson ADDRESS 228 West 22 St. Manhattan DATE August 18,

1938 SUBJECT REMINISCENCE OF BRONX, 1885 1. Ancestry German on father's

and mother's side. 2. Place and date of birth 18th St. and 1st Ave. Manhattan. July 11,

1878 3. Family 4. Places lived in, with dates In 1880 moved to Bronx at The Hub. Lived

in Bronx all her life. 5. Education, with dates 6. Occupations and accomplishments,

with dates 7. Special skills and interests 8. Community and religious activities Attended

Lutheran Church at 154th St. and Cortlandt Ave. (called The Rooster Church because

of its weathervane 9. Description of informant Proud carriage. Strong German features,

grey, hair, blue eyes. Large frame. Kind, indulgent, cooperative. 10. Other Points gained

in interview As a child went to picnics on the Ball Field at 136 St. Strawberry festivals held there each Spring. This field was owned by a man named Tobin (first name unknown.) The field was called Tobin's University, and the rumour was that Old Man Tobin had once been a College Professor.

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FOLKLORE NEW YORK FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited) STATE New York NAME OF WORKER May Swenson ADDRESS 228 West 22nd Street, Manhattan DATE August 18, 1938 SUBJECT REMINISCENCE OF BRONX, 1885 THE FROG HOLLOW GANG

When I was in my teens, we lived near 149th Street at the corner of Cortlandt and Morris Avenues. And at the end of the block was a ravine with a little crook running through it. A gang of petty thieves lived down there much like hoboes in a "jungle" - in shacks they had, oh, I guess, nailed together or plastered together out of wooden slats and sheets of tin.

They were known as the Frog Hollow Gang, for the ravine was full of frogs what with the river and all and it being rather swampy.

Our neighborhood was scared to death of the Frog Hollow Gang and every door was barred at night. Some of the neighbors kept a light burning in the hall all night. It was said that those men could see in the dark like cats or owls but couldn't see in daylight and that if you kept a light burning they would be blinded and would go away. Of course my father pooh-poohed that idea, but we children used to believe it. 2 Our mothers used to scold us children by saying, "Don't do this or don't do that or the Frog Hollow Gang will get you!"

Funny, but now that I think of it I can't recall a single person around our place who ever was robbed by the gang. But there were their shacks down in the hollow and once in a while we'd catch sight of one of them fishing in the creek when we kids would stand on the edge of the hollow in daylight and look down, you know.

Finally the police came along and cleaned them out and the City made a sort of park out of Frog Hollow — a pretty little place too. But we children always felt queer about going there to play — and at night especially, with the sound of the frogs and all, nobody would go near it.